

## INQUIRY AT HALIFAX TO BE OPENED TO-DAY

Dominion Counsel Makes Special Statement to "Sun" on Cause of Disaster.

### STORIES CONTRADICTORY

No Basis for German Plot Theory—TNT Expert Is Called.

Special Despatch to The Sun.  
HALIFAX, N. S., Dec. 11.—Whether a confusion of signals or a miscalculation of the effect of a reversed starboard propeller on a ship moving forward through the water was responsible for the Halifax disaster is to be determined at the inquiry before Justice Drysdale to-morrow morning.

The inquiry starts while Halifaxans are still most concerned with finding their dead and reuniting their missing families, while the search in the ruins of North Halifax is yielding an average of nearly sixty bodies a day.

W. A. Henry, K. C., will appear at the inquiry for the Mont Blanc. The agents for the Belgian relief ship Imo also will be represented by counsel. The assertions made by Capt. Aime Lemedec and Pilot Francis Mackey of the Mont Blanc are directly opposed to the contentions by witnesses to be called from the Imo, with the Frenchman's position supported by apparently stronger evidence.

Capt. Lemedec claims that the Imo acted contrary to exchanged signals and rammed him after he had maneuvered so that the ships were in a safe parallel position in the narrows.

Among the witnesses will be Dr. Harrington, an expert on TNT, who is here with the Red Cross relief corps from Boston.

Make Statement to "Sun."  
The Dominion's counsel, Mr. Henry, has an abstract of all the evidence to be given at the inquiry in his possession, and that he has summarized in the following statement for THE SUN:

"Capt. Lemedec tells me that he saw the Belgian a mile away, headed toward the Dartmouth shore. Under the rules of the road they were at that time crossing ships, but in such a channel the following international convention would have applied:

"In narrow channels every steam vessel shall, when it is safe and practicable, keep to that side of the fairway or midchannel which lies on the starboard side of such vessel."

"That rule clearly applied. It was the duty of the Frenchman to keep on the eastern, of the Belgian to keep on the western side."

"The Frenchman slowed down his engines and blew one blast, meaning, 'I am directing my course to starboard.' The Belgian replied with short blasts, meaning, 'I am directing my course to port.'"

"Those signals seem to have been several times repeated until the vessels came very close together—only a few hundred yards apart."

"The Frenchman saw a collision was

## Risk Lives Fighting Fire on Munitions Ship

HALIFAX, Dec. 11.—With complete disregard for their own lives in an effort to save this desolated city from another catastrophe, a group of Dartmouth citizens early to-day boarded a steamship said to have been laden with munitions, which was ashore and was being abandoned hastily by her crew.

The vessel carried a deck load of oil and as she came in close to shore with smoke pouring from her superstructure, the sight of her fleeing crew stirred the watchers ashore to prompt action. A volunteer fire fighting force was quickly organized and the burning ship was boarded.

After hard work the flames were extinguished. The crew remained ashore to-day, preferring the scant relief shelter provided in Dartmouth.

Since the explosion on the Mont Blanc crews of French munition vessels are reported to be unwilling to enter Halifax harbor.

Inevitable unless he did something. He starboarded his helm, having previously stopped his engine, so that he headed then to port, and he claims that he brought the two vessels into a position of absolute safety on parallel and opposite courses—starboard to starboard.

Belgian Again at Fault.

"The Belgian then blew three blasts, meaning 'My engines are going full speed astern.' The Belgian being light and speedy, the effect, it appears, was very great, and she swung hard and far. The effect of a right handed propeller reversed her head to starboard, just the direction in which the Imo did not want to go. The result of this was that the Imo became a ram and ran into the Frenchman."

"Just before the collision the Frenchman put his engines astern to avoid or minimize the effect of the ramming, but the Belgian struck her at No. 1 hold, cutting into her one-third of her width with a right angle blow."

"Dense black smoke immediately poured from the forward part of the ship, followed by pillars of flame. Seeing the fire was beyond all possibility of extinguishing and knowing the cargo they had aboard, the Mont Blanc officers and crew abandoned the ship. The shock of the collision turned the bow of the Mont Blanc toward the Richmond pier and she drifted in that direction."

"The theory aboard the Mont Blanc as regards the fire is that sparks generated by the collision started fire in the benzol cargo deck, and that set fire to the picric acid which was in No. 1 hold. The explosion followed some twenty-five minutes after-ward."

TNT Expert Called.

"Until this afternoon I had accepted the general report that the explosion came seventeen minutes after, but the captain and mate of another ship give me the best evidence on that point. They first said the explosion followed half an hour after the collision, and they were positive that it could not have occurred seventeen minutes after. They say twenty-five minutes at least elapsed."

"The explosion is supposed to have been caused by the bulkhead between No. 1 and No. 2 holds becoming red hot and setting off the TNT which was

stored in the second hold. That is the theory of the master and the second officer of the Mont Blanc.

"We happen to have here now Dr. Harrington of Boston, who is known as one of the world's best experts on TNT. He formulated regulations for handling TNT for the United States Government. I shall call him to tell what he thinks as to whether the accident could have been produced as claimed by the Frenchman."

"It seems quite possible that had there been no benzol aboard the picric acid might not have exploded, and the TNT might not have gone off, as I am informed that both these explosives required confined space and a detonator."

German Plot Talk Unfounded.

"So far as any German responsibility is concerned it is inconsistent with the evidence. Why should a Belgian relief ship want to ram the Mont Blanc? Besides, the Imo did not know what cargo was aboard and made no attempt to escape after the collision, as she would have done had the nature of the cargo been known."

"All talk of German plots in this connection is unfounded."

## BOSTON RELIEF TIMELY.

Saved Many Lives—Death List Now Placed at 2,000.

HALIFAX, N. S., Dec. 11.—The American hospital and relief units were working full blast to-day.

Except for the immediate despatch from Boston of a special relief train the death toll from the fire Thursday, members of the general committee declared, would have been greater. To-day enough supplies had been received to relieve distress and the homeless discarded the burned and tattered garments they had been wearing since the multiple shelling and explosion and felt warm and comfortable again in good clothes.

A trip through the hospital zone showed that facilities were adequate for a city of the size of Halifax.

While trains bearing glass to replace the thousands of windows shattered by the shock from the steamer Mont Blanc are speeding here American surgeons are still picking the broken fragments from the faces, eyes and heads of hundreds, many of whom may be marked for life or blind. At Bellevue Hospital, where the first Massachusetts relief unit is stationed, surgeons took stock to-day and found that glass wounds predominated. Some of the cases there are pitiable. In one ward are five children half blind, and no specialists ever worked harder than they are working in this improvised hospital to save the eyesight of the little ones, still dazed and terrified by the roar that shook down their homes.

"The United States already has sent a force of doctors and nurses sufficient to deal with the situation here," John P. Moors, head of the American Red Cross delegation, said in a statement to-day.

"From information so far received I estimate that nearly 2,000 were killed and perhaps 3,000 severely wounded."

Healy's to Aid Halifax Sufferers.

Ice skating experts of international fame announced yesterday a benefit to be given next Sunday night in Thomas Healy's Golden Glades for the sufferers in the Halifax explosion and fire. All the professional skaters of the Winter Ice Show and members of the musical comedy "On the Carpet" will participate. Among the performers will be Ellen and Orin Markhus, the Norwegian whirlwinds Romaine, Elsie and Paulsen, the Apache ice dancers; Ellen Dallerup, Katie Schmidt, the Coesack skater; Lora Jean Carlisle, the skating hunkster; and Winklow and Steele, the jazz dancers. An admission of \$5 will be charged.

## MONEY NEEDED NOW FOR HALIFAX RELIEF

Red Cross Assumes Control of Work to Avoid Duplication of Effort.

5,000 OR MORE HOMELESS

Dowling Urges New Ordinance to Reduce Fire Hazards at Piers Here.

The distress of Halifax is being assuaged by American Red Cross contributions, administered from Washington. While an appeal has been sent by officials throughout Canada to raise a \$25,000,000 relief fund, American committees are at the scene of disaster distributing clothing, blankets and money.

It was announced yesterday that the American Red Cross will act as the official relief organization for the stricken city in order to avoid duplication of effort. All American funds should be turned over to divisional offices of the Red Cross.

Elliot Wadsworth of the Red Cross War Council yesterday issued instructions to division chiefs regarding the relief campaign. Ethan Allen, manager of the Atlantic division, received the message. It says in part:

"The American Red Cross has made abundant contributions of blankets, hospital equipment, new clothing, medical supplies, and other materials which were urgently needed and will pay for these supplies out of its own funds."

"The Red Cross has sent a staff of 100 doctors, 150 nurses and 50 social workers. Those in responsible positions in Halifax advise that the personnel and material now there or on the way will fully meet the present temporary need."

"Therefore, the Red Cross officers should not accept supplies of any kind except such as may be later specifically requested through Red Cross channels. Old clothes should not be taken under any circumstances."

"The most helpful gift now is money to be expended by responsible committees in charge. All Red Cross officers should accept such contributions and concentrate them at headquarters in Washington. They will be forwarded at once and an accounting made of their use."

Bowling & Co. of 17 Battery place, agents for the Red Cross Steamship Company, yesterday received a telegram from Mayor Peter S. Martin of Halifax expressing thanks for relief funds. The New York branch of the Union Bank of Canada wired \$4,177 yesterday afternoon, a gift from the Bowling company, its employees, and W. R. Grace & Co. and its employees.

Contributions announced by Jacob H. Schiff, treasurer for the Halifax Red Cross relief fund, included \$1,000 from Mr. Schiff, \$500 from Henry B. Towne, \$100 from Miss Mary Taber and \$10 amounts from Mrs. John Woodruff Simpson and Mrs. Fitch W. Smith.

The Board of Aldermen considered a resolution introduced by Acting Mayor Dowling to amend the Code of Ordinances to permit reduction of fire hazard

at piers. The resolution was referred to the committee on general welfare.

The amendment provides for the use of spark arresters on smokestacks of harbor craft when near piers at which cotton or naval stores are handled, for protection of hatch combings and for keeping up steam when discharging cargoes to permit prompt action of the vessel's fire hose.

John H. Ellsworth, chairman of the New York chapter of the American Red Cross, the first agent of the organization to reach Halifax with offers of aid, returned to the city last night. He told of the difficulties he encountered in crossing the devastated city with a blizzard raging to reach the headquarters of Col. Bell. The offer of relief was repeated to city officials. The first call for aid upon the Washington headquarters was sent by Mr. Ellsworth from St. John.

The Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York yesterday appropriated \$10,000 from an emergency fund to aid Halifax.



VALUE is a word that some merchants seem to have rediscovered. Here, Value needs no dusting off and furbishing up, for it has been kept bright, through daily practice, since this business was founded.

JOHN DAVID  
STEINBLICH-SMART CLOTHES  
Broadway at 32nd Street

A large number of contributions under \$25 were received yesterday. The Brooklyn chapter reported \$10,100 received, of which \$3,500 was from Mr. and Mrs. Alfred T. White, \$5,000 from "Two Friends," and \$1,600 anonymously given. Julia Pierrepont gave \$100.

The Atlantic division reported contributions of \$1,000 from Van Cortlandt chapter, from Heidelberg, Wolf & Co. of \$500; J. A. Mitchell, \$200; William Childs, \$100; Bank of Montreal (N. Y.), \$107.75; and a number of smaller amounts.

## AID HALIFAX ORPHANS.

N. Y. Women Offer to Adopt Waifs—Canadian Club to Raise \$25,000.

The relief committee of the Canadian Club, in session last night in the Hotel Biltmore, decided to confine its efforts to caring for the orphans created by the Halifax disaster. Nearly \$15,000 have already been subscribed to the

Canadian Club Halifax Relief Fund and the club has set its goal at \$25,000.

A number of New York women of means have written or telephoned their desire to adopt, or care for temporarily, all boys and girls whose parents have been lost in the calamity. Six women telephoned one member of the club within an hour and a half last night offering to care for orphaned children. In each case the volunteer said she had come to realize the need after reading an article in the Evening Sun.

## Gifts Appropriate for Christmas 1917

A warm glove, a general service glove and a dress glove—the set complete or a single pair makes a sensible attractive gift.

For Men  
Tan Cape Warm Gloves, wool lined, full wrist with adjustable strap 4.00  
Tan Cape Business Gloves, full P X M sewn, spear backs 2.50  
Gray Mocha Dress Gloves, pique sewn, light weight 2.75

For Women  
Gray and Tan Cape Warm Gloves, Vicuna lined, extra long wrist with adjustable strap 4.00  
Washable Cape Utility Gloves in buff and tan, pique sewn, with two-tone embroidery 2.50  
French Kid Dress Gloves, full pique sewn, crocheted embroidery, in African brown, mahogany, navy, gunmetal and other fashionable shades 2.75

For Children  
Khaki Wool Warm Gloves with extra-long wrist and adjustable strap 1.25  
Tan Cape Utility Gloves, wool lined, two-toned embroidery 2.00  
Unlined Dress Gloves of buff Washable Cape, Tan Cape and White Lambkin 1.50

## Centmeri Gloves

400 Fifth Ave.

(Opposite Tiffany & Co.)

## G. SCHIRMER'S VICTROLA SALESROOMS

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Convenient terms

# To-day is Halifax Day AT HERO LAND

This is your opportunity to help the victims of the terrible disaster.

All the gate receipts to-day as well as the receipts of a majority of the committees participating in this most wonderful of spectacles will go at once to the relief of the Halifax sufferers and will be cabled direct to the Canadian Government.

YOUR CHECK SENT TO CHARLES H. SABIN, TREASURER, HERO LAND, GRAND CENTRAL PALACE, FOR ANY AMOUNT, IF DESIGNATED FOR THE HALIFAX VICTIMS, WILL GO IN FULL WITHOUT ANY DEDUCTION WHATSOEVER FOR THIS PURPOSE.

HERO LAND, by universal popular demand, is to remain open three additional days or until NEXT SATURDAY NIGHT. It is open from 11 A. M. until 1 A. M. You have but three days in which to see the greatest entertainment ever staged in New York.

Aside from its wealth of amusement features there is offered at Hero Land a wonderful variety of articles suitable for Christmas gifts at prices much lower than they can be purchased at any store.

YOU ARE NOT SOLICITED TO BUY, but can procure at Hero Land remarkable bargains in articles for your own use, or for gifts, if you will but seek them out.

ONLY 3 MORE DAYS of HERO LAND  
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General Admission, 50 Cents